



Senator Wayne Allard's Report from Washington

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Allard Capital Conference

I am pleased to join University of Colorado President John Buechner in announcing that 90 Colorado residents have been selected to attend the third annual Allard Capital Conference, to be held in Washington, D.C. from May 17 through May 20.

These Coloradans are in for a once and a lifetime opportunity. They will get to interact with public policy makers, members of Congress and gain a better understanding of how our government functions.

The conference participants will meet with Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve; 1996 Republican Presidential candidate Bob Dole; George Tenet, Director of the CIA; General Richard Myers, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Jim Duff, Administrative Assistant to Chief Justice William Renquist and Dr. Delores Etter, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. In addition, the group will participate in a budget exercise.

Participants will also meet members of the Senate and House of Representatives including Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), Chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee; Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD), Senate Minority Leader; Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX), Chairman of the Banking Committee; Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), Senate Majority Leader and Congressman Dick Armey (R-TX); House Majority Leader; Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) and Colorado U.S. Representatives Joel Hefley, Scott McInnis and Mark Udall.

Sand Dunes National Park Bill

On May 11, I introduced my bill to designate the Great Sand Dunes National Monument as a national park.

This legislation creates a national park, preserve and wildlife refuge at the Sand Dunes National Monument near Alamosa, Colorado. Not only will it preserve the natural beauty of the Sand Dunes, it will protect San Luis Valley residents' water rights and ensure that the federal government complies with state water law.

This bill has overwhelming support of the local elected officials and residents of the San Luis Valley. I look forward to working with Representative Scott McInnis (R-CO), who has introduced a similar bill in the House of Representatives, and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to pass this legislation in the 106th Congress.

FROM THE SENATOR

The Time Has Come To End The Marriage Tax Penalty

In March, I fulfilled my promise to hold town meetings in all 63 Colorado counties this year. It has been an honor and a privilege to listen to the concerns of those I represent.



One view came through loud and clear at these meetings:

the need to end the marriage tax penalty. As it turns out, over 400,000 couples in Colorado incur an additional tax burden simply because they are married. This is grossly unfair and counter-productive. I believe it is the responsibility of the Federal government to pursue relief for those families burdened by the penalty.

Of course, there is nothing in the tax code that explicitly dictates a "penalty" for marriage. The additional tax is a result of the progressive tax structure, which ratchets up the tax burden as income increases. The "penalty" arises because the tax brackets and standard deductions given to married couples are currently not twice as large as those given to single filers.

Take what happens to two \$30,000 a year wage earners who get married. As a single individual, a \$30,000-a-year wage earner would pay about \$3,000 in taxes. However, under the current joint filing schedule, this married couple-that now earns a total of \$60,000-owes \$8,400 in tax per year, a \$2,400 penalty for marrying each other. Nationally, more than 21 million married couples paid an average of nearly \$1,400 in additional taxes in 1996 because they must file jointly. This is according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Such statistics raise a number of concerns. For one, the hardest hit by the penalty are families dependent on two wage earners. Because of economic and social changes, these two-earner families make up an ever increasing percentage of the work force.

More importantly, they make up an ever larger segment of the lower to middle class - Americans working hard to provide for their children. An extra \$1,400 for these Colorado families could mean three months of child care, several months of car payments or even a computer for the kids.

The marriage penalty also reduces the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), an effective tool in helping the working poor. By phasing out the EITC for taxpayers who marry more quickly than if those taxpayers had applied for it as single taxpayers, the tax code hurts the people who need help the most-working families.

On February 10, 2000, the House of Representatives approved The Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Act of 2000 (H.R. 6). This bill would increase the standard deduction for joint returns to twice that of single returns, increase the width of the lowest tax bracket for joint returns to twice that of single returns, and raise the phase out limit on the Earned Income Tax Credit by \$2,000 for married couples. I fully endorse this legislation.

It was my hope that the Senate would follow the lead of the House and quickly pass S. 2346, the "Marriage Tax Relief Act of 2000." Several of my Senate Republican colleagues and I worked to pass this legislation by April 15. However, partisan politics have resulted in an unfortunate delay.

During the State of the Union Address, President Clinton committed to ending the tax penalty on marriage. Once again, White House bureaucrats have since backed off that commitment. This is truly unfortunate. Marriage penalty tax relief would provide help directly to working families, without new programs and more layers of bureaucracy. Please, Mr. President, join me in helping the people of Colorado. The time has come to end the marriage penalty.

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Contact one of my offices....

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